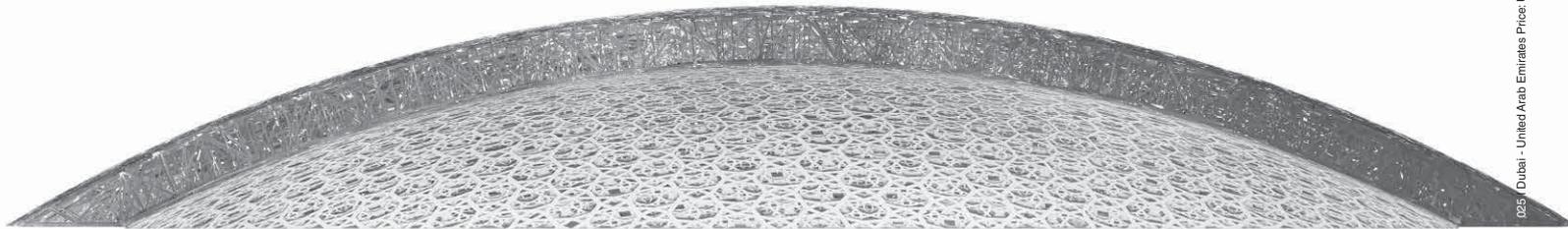


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BACK TO THE FUTURE



Focus: museums awakening, from UAE to the world Saadiyat Island, Nantes, São Paulo

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Retrieving the memory of what seemed lost



City Hall of Francisco Caua Vinaroz. Colezione Joaquin José Federico



Vegás & Mileto



Vegás & Mileto

Camilla Mileto & Fernando Vegás

- Work**
The garden of memory at Vinaroz
- Location**
Vinaroz, Castellón, Spain
- Year**
2014
- Architecture and Design**
Camilla Mileto and Fernando Vegás, architects (UPV) Universidad Politécnica de Valencia
- Architect**
City Hall Architect: Ana Arnaiz
- Assistants**
M. Soledad García Sáez, Lidia García Soriano, F. Javier Gómez, Ana María Sobel Sagovia Campos
- Engineers**
Installations: Antonio Vie, Martí Guillamón, engineer
- Building Management**
S.L. Conservation works: Noema Restauradores
- Construction enterprise:** Construcciones Gálvez Zarcoso S.L.
- Interior design:** U.T.E. Iberdrola
- Stone provider:** Innae Stone Group
- Landscape**
Landscape architect: María Edo Albalade
- Additional Functions**
Conservation consultant: Beatriz Martín
- Design:** Tarma Sáez, Salvador Tomás Márquez
- Installations:** Antonio Vie, Martí Guillamón
- Architects:** Noema Restauradores S.L., Camilla Mileto, Fernando Vegás, Pablo Rodríguez Navarro (UPV)
- Image credits**
Sindicato Cava Vinardos, Colezione Joaquin José Federico, Camilla Mileto, Fernando Vegás & Mileto, Vicente A. Jiménez

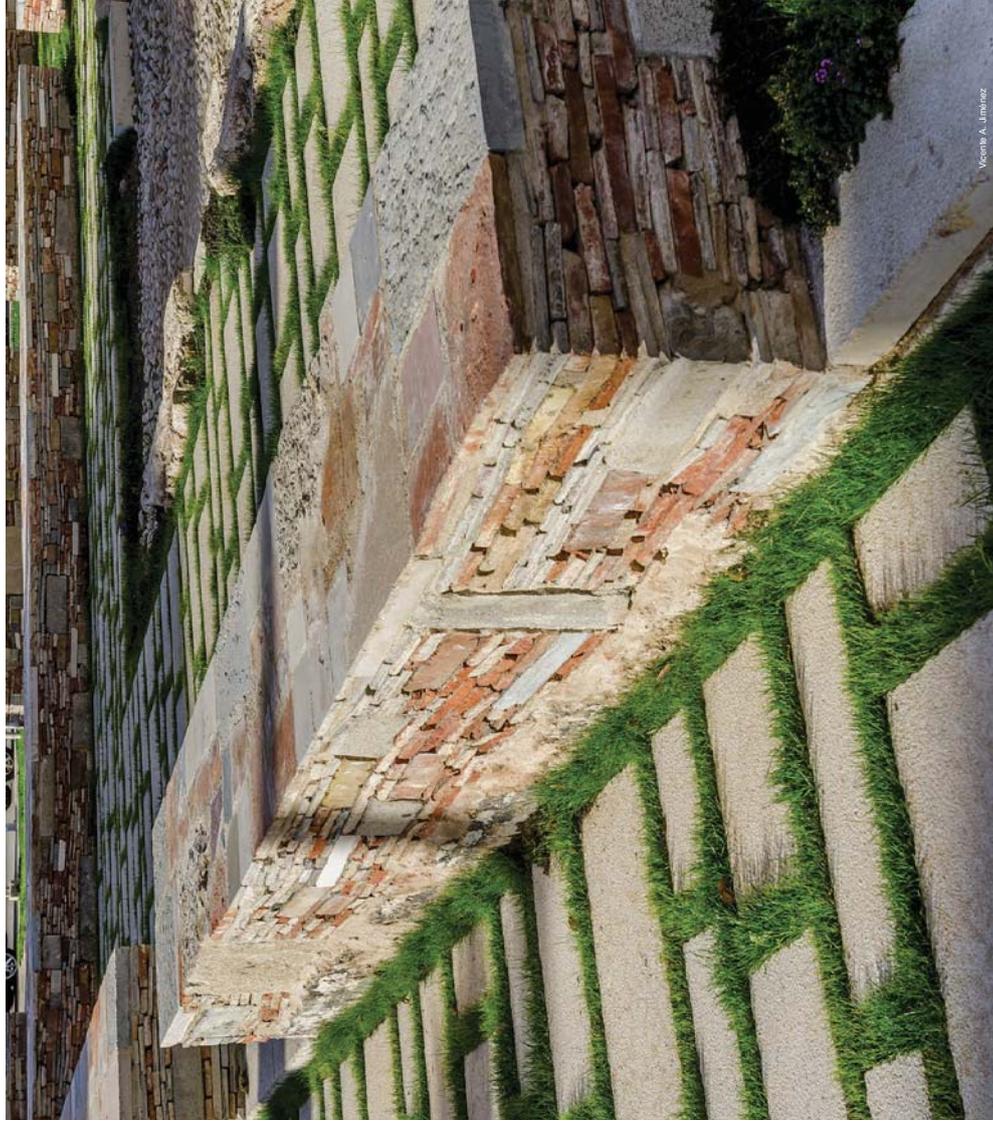
Too often the development of modern cities tends to destroy historic legacies, demolishing old evidences and living places to allow the contemporary society to move in and live these old spaces in new forms. The memory of the destruction of these architectures - sometimes accompanied for a brief period by feeble protests and the nostalgia of what is no longer there - rapidly fades away in the frenetic new life. In a few cases, even though time has passed, this memory, which had almost seemed disappeared, resurfaces. Although the material rests of what has been may be almost completely lost, what remains still has a great symbolic value, evoking the integrity of what once was there. This happens especially when a memorial is created: a space that even though incomplete, recalls the completeness of its original form. In the city of Vinaroz (Castellón, Spain) may visit the Memory garden and remember the old San Francisco complex, which from the 17th century had marked the city with its church and convent. After four centuries of peaceful life, in fact, in 2001 it was demolished to make room for a huge residential complex. Despite its significance, at the time the historic site was under no artistic restrictions and its disposal couldn't be prevented through state protection.



Vicente A. Jiménez



Vegás & Mileto



Vicente A. Jiménez

Therefore, apart from the indoor flooring and a small portion of the church's north wall on which other buildings leaned, it was completely demolished. Nevertheless its destruction caused quite a stir and the local administration didn't like the proceeding in the real sense of the word. It was a rift in the historic site, that doesn't mean that the former monastic complex wasn't disrespectfully devaluated by its transformation in a parking space. Near this, new asphalted area, even the remains of the outer wall and flooring greatly deteriorated being exposed to weathering and vandalism for almost fifteen years.

To retrieve this important site from its sad process of material and immaterial decay, and to evoke the historic memory of the building that once stood where rows of cars now were parked, in 2014 the creation of a memorial garden was decided. Though only fourteen years had passed by since its destruction, retrieving the memory of the gardens and orchards that long ago surrounded the religious architecture was no easy task, but the architects in charge of the project strongly believed in the possibility of restoring the site to its dignity, returning it to the local community.

Building a memorial offers very much more than a simple act of commemoration, as stated above, it is not a matter of returning the architecture its formal integrity, on the contrary it means creating a space, which may differ very much from the original one, but that has the capacity to evoke the values of the former one.

Therefore the architects Camilla Mileto and Fernando Vegas, both professors at the Universitat Politècnica de València, where they teach architectural composition and conservation, designed a meeting place in which to relax and have fun, recovering a living space for the citizens and tourists of Vinaroz. They removed the layers of asphalt that had concealed the traces of the complex's walls and designed new garden seats using the original building ashlar, stones, tiles and roof tiles found during the excavation. Instead of adding the results of this excavations to the municipal landfill, where these remains had been buried, they were brought back and amalgamated with many others to finally become a memorial visibly recovered, just as in an archaeological site the old evidences are treated as



precious jewels. When this gathering process was completed, the architects carefully decided how to reuse them, finally incorporating them in the new park in order to evoke the original building. The only surviving wall was carefully restored using remains and imprints of renderings, paintings, pottery, etc., as well as the remains of the adjoining houses that had made the survival of the wall to the present day possible.

The area inside the former building perimeter was paved with local stone, allowing the remaining spaces to be clearly distinguished. When the project reached the remaining part which is now used as a concert area is closely spaced

and follows the bays of the original building, the rest of the former built site was designed in order to permit the vegetation to grow between the pavement slabs. Also the remains of the masonry walls and pebble paving of the building area found on the ground interact with the vegetation of the garden, as they seem to naturally grow from the earth, almost as if instead of growing grass in these points stones emerged. Through these choices nature and artifice smoothly blends into each other, perfectly integrating garden design and architecture, creating a bond between church and orchards, but in a new harmonic whole.



Creating this unity was not the result of a differentiated approach. While one might expect the architects to pay great attention to historic conservation and have a more laid back approach to the garden design, Mierco and Vegas had equal consideration to the conservation of architecture or nature, so that the archaeological remains, plastered surfaces, and vegetation, preserved and used as the basis for the new vegetation in the garden areas.

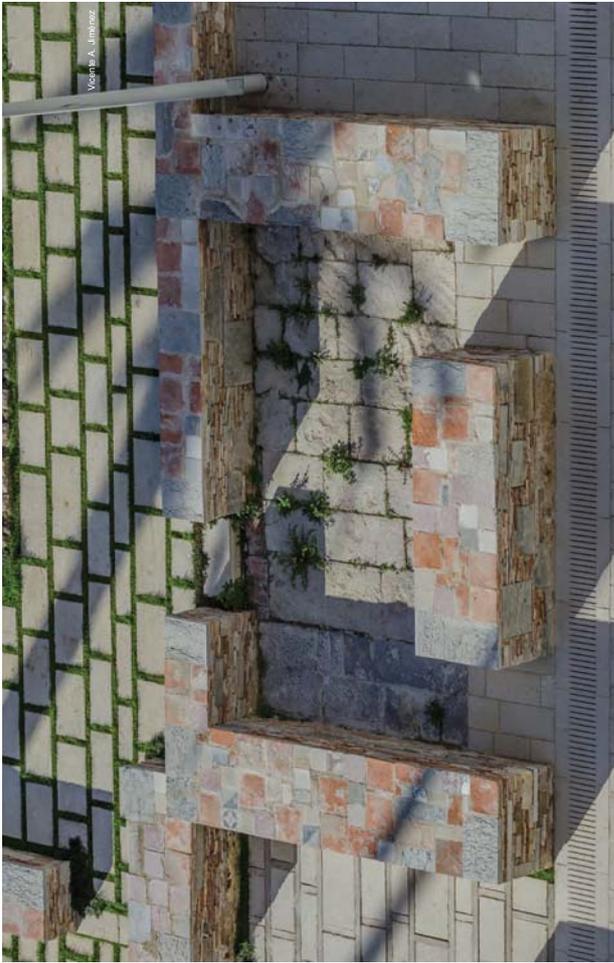
In addition to recovering and restoring the traces of the building, the original surrounds the whole area was recovered and new accesses to the surrounding square were incorporated.

In the end this garden square represents a successful combination of history and contemporaneity. It still preserves many archaeological remains of the crypt, the well and the cloister, carefully conserving the small portions of plaster as well as the disjointed tiles, respected for the future generations. At the same time it requalifies a degraded site, returning it to the population as a new place of socialisation, of memory, relaxation and leisure time, a space that seemed lost, but that is now fully alive and, though deeply transformed by time, still manages to recall a remote time while being fully anchored to the present.

Governor Piusio Krauss



Martha A. Jimenez



Martha A. Jimenez



Martha A. Jimenez